



DATE: March 1, 2005

TO: Oklahoma Conservation Partnership
NRCS Employees

SUBJECT: Monthly Activities Report

The following report of current activities is provided for your information.

PROGRAMS (Reported by Kevin Norton)

Conservation Security Program (CSP)

Twenty-three district conservationists and selected support personnel representing Oklahoma's three CSP watersheds attended the regional CSP rollout session in Fort Worth, Texas. The training session was held February 22–25, 2005, and provided the policy and programmatic training necessary for watershed level implementation of the program this year. The final rule and sign-up announcement for the program are currently in the approval process at the national level. Watershed teams designed strategies and work plans for a coordinated delivery of the program in each watershed. The Watershed Teams will begin the information, education, and outreach workshops within each watershed this month.

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

Agriculture Secretary, Mike Johanns announced that \$22.2 million in EQIP funds would be provided to 17 states for their high levels of performance in implementing the program during 2004. These funds will help farmers and ranchers improve soil, air, and water resources on private working lands. These awards recognize states that have achieved the greatest efficiency in delivering technical and financial assistance to agricultural producers. In addition, the program also helps producers comply with federal, state, and local environmental regulations.

The program provides a performance incentive to optimize the overall environmental benefits of EQIP. In awarding the incentive, USDA-NRCS considered factors such as efficiency in providing technical assistance for conservation system applications, strategic planning and program implementation, degree of emphasis on funding comprehensive nutrient management plans with livestock producers, use of technical service providers, and contracts with limited resource farmers and ranchers.

The states receiving the performance award are: Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Idaho, Louisiana, Maine, Mississippi, Montana, New Mexico, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Texas, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming. Oklahoma's award totaled \$1,461,988, of which \$1,315,789 will be allocated as financial assistance and \$146,199 as technical assistance.

EQIP Listening Forum

The NRCS is conducting a public listening session to receive input from farmers, ranchers, and others on the EQIP. The EQIP Final Rule requires the NRCS to periodically review and update priorities, utilizing input from the public and affected stakeholders to ensure the program continues to address natural resource needs. The NRCS is requesting a review of these priorities so EQIP can be responsive to any emerging resource issues. Updating the national priorities will help prepare the NRCS for the 2006 program year and for the next Farm Bill reauthorization.

This listening session does not have to be exclusive to EQIP and can be used to gather information on other programs such as the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP), Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP), etc. The NRCS is interested in determining the following relative to EQIP:

- What emerging natural resource issues are not addressed by the current national EQIP priorities?
- What modifications, if any, are needed to the four existing national priorities: (1) Reduction of non-point source pollution, (2) Reduction of emissions, (3) Reduction of soil erosion and sedimentation, and (4) Promotion of at-risk species habitat conservation?

Oklahoma will have a meeting that is open to the public. Agriculture producers, other USDA program participants, and interested parties are invited to participate in this meeting, which will be held on March 8, 2005, from 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm in the Alpine/Calypso Room at Metro Tech, 1900 Springlake Drive, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

Written or oral comments will be officially received as part of the public record. Written comments will be accepted at the meeting and by mail or facsimile. Written comments must be postmarked or faxed by March 8, 2005, and addressed to: M. Darrel Dominick, State Conservationist, USDA-NRCS, Attention: Kevin Norton, Assistant State Conservationist (Programs), 100 USDA, Suite 206, Stillwater, OK, 74074-2655, Fax (405) 742-1288.

Environmental Quality Incentives Program Administration/ Reconciliation - Completed

On October 1, 2005, the NRCS began the process of assuming full administrative responsibility for the EQIP. This included assuming all contractual and payment records previously administered by the Farm Service Agency. As of this writing, Oklahoma NRCS and district field and administrative personnel have completed a tremendous workload in the reconciliation of over 6,100 EQIP contracts into the ProTracts system and have executed well over 850 (ave. 250/month) payments to contract participants. Only 15 contracts remain to be reconciled, and just three payments remain to be paid due to administrative issues. The NRCS and conservation district personnel are commended for their dedication and hard work through this transition.

Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)

On February 23, 2005, Oklahoma issued the list of approved applications for funding under the WHIP for fiscal year 2005. The selected applications are approved for completion of contracts and advance preparation of conservation plans, contract support documents, and contractual documents for future obligation of WHIP funds for fiscal year 2005. Oklahoma NRCS received a WHIP allocation of \$1,018,249, for the current fiscal year. The current ranking list was extracted from ProTracts, reflecting 2005 application activity as of February 21, 2005, and contains approvals for immediate wildlife habitat plan development and contracting for 41 applications totaling \$610,234. Three applications representing over \$370,000 in financial assistance will undergo peer review prior to approval for funding. These three applications requested cost-share in excess of \$50,000 and will be reviewed prior to funding. The review team will be comprised of representatives from NRCS, Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. In addition, 24 applications for \$253,479 were determined pre-approved. These applications will have the wildlife habitat development plan completed and developed at a level sufficient to immediately obligate any additional state funds, re-distribution of national funds, or initial fiscal year 2006 allocations.

State Technical Committee Meeting

The Oklahoma State Technical Committee (STTC) will meet prior to the EQIP Listening Session (from 9:30 am – Noon) to discuss issues relating to Confined Animal Feeding Operations (CAFO) and the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP). The NRCS is seeking input from STTC members on issues and conservation needs relating to animal feeding operations. This information will be used to prioritize technical assistance and develop EQIP financial assistance to address the major environmental and regulatory issues facing agriculture producers. In addition, the Farm Service Agency and Oklahoma

Conservation Commission will present information and update the STTC on a proposal for the CREP for selected Oklahoma watersheds.

ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES (Reported by HR staff)

Personnel Actions

	Name	Position	Duty Location	Effctv. Date	Action
Promotion	Howell, Chadd A.	SCT, GS-06	Waurika FO	2/6/05	Career Ladder Promotion
	Mosteller, Jennifer	SCT, GS-06	Pauls Valley FO	2/6/05	Career Ladder Promotion
	Deen, Matthew	SCT, GS-06	Idabel FO	2/6/05	Career Ladder Promotion
	Parham, Paul	SCT, GS-07	Atoka FO	2/6/05	Career Ladder Promotion
	Boyett, Jacobson B.	SS, GS-11	Stillwater SO	2/20/05	Career Ladder Promotion
	Jarrell, Jason K.	SCT, GS-05	Bristow FO	2/20/05	Career Ladder Promotion
Change to Lower Grade	Peterson, J. D'Ann	SC, GS-09	Enid FO	2/20/05	From Temporary Promotion
Reassignment	Fjeseth, Wayne	DC, GS-11	Guthrie FO	2/20/05	Reassignment from Norman FO
Resignation	Moritz, Lindsey K.	ST (SC), GS-04	Norman FO	2/1/05	Resignation

Key: SCT – Soil Conservation Technician; SS – Soil Scientist; SC – Soil Conservationist; DC – District Conservationist; ST – Student Trainee

EARTH TEAM VOLUNTEER PROGRAM (Reported by Becka Redding)

The Oklahoma Earth Team Volunteer Program awards have been processed for FY04 contributions. The winners in various categories are listed below. Congratulations to all the volunteers, offices, and partners involved with the success of the Oklahoma ETV program for FY04.

Over 1,000 hours donated in FY04:

Clyde Morehead, Ouachita Mountains RC&D

Bill Wilson, Haskell County

Jeanne McCulloch, Wheatland RC&D

Most Volunteers:

Wilburton Field Office (1st Place)

Tulsa Field Office (2nd Place)

Idabel Field Office (3rd Place)

Workgroup Recognition:

Ouachita Mountains RC&D (20 workgroups)

Extra Effort Volunteer Award:

Randolph Cotten, Ouachita Mountains RC&D

ECOLOGICAL SCIENCES (Reported by Randy Freeland and staff)

David Wells, Agronomist, McAlester Technical Service Office, provided three "Brush Management Training" sessions during the month of February for Teams 10, 11, and 12 in Zone 4. Some of the items covered were economic considerations for brush management implementation, identify if a situation should be considered "Brush Management" or "Land Clearing", and ways to determine brush management priorities. If you need any additional information, please let me know.

Prescribed Burn Training

Eleven NRCS and ODWC employees attended a two day Prescribed Burn Training Workshop provided by John Mustain, Resource Specialist, Perry, Chuck Stanley, Resource Specialist, Woodward, and Denise Turner, Grazing Lands Specialist, Cherokee. The course was held at Woodward and included various burn-related topics, such as fire ecology and history, effects of fire on plants, animals and soil, smoke management, and firing techniques. The course concluded with the actual development of a prescribed burn plan. Following completion of the course, the attendees obtained an "Apprentice" level of authority, which will allow them to develop, but not approve, burn plans. Once they have physically attended three prescribed burns, they can obtain "qualified" authority, which will allow them to design and approve burn plans.



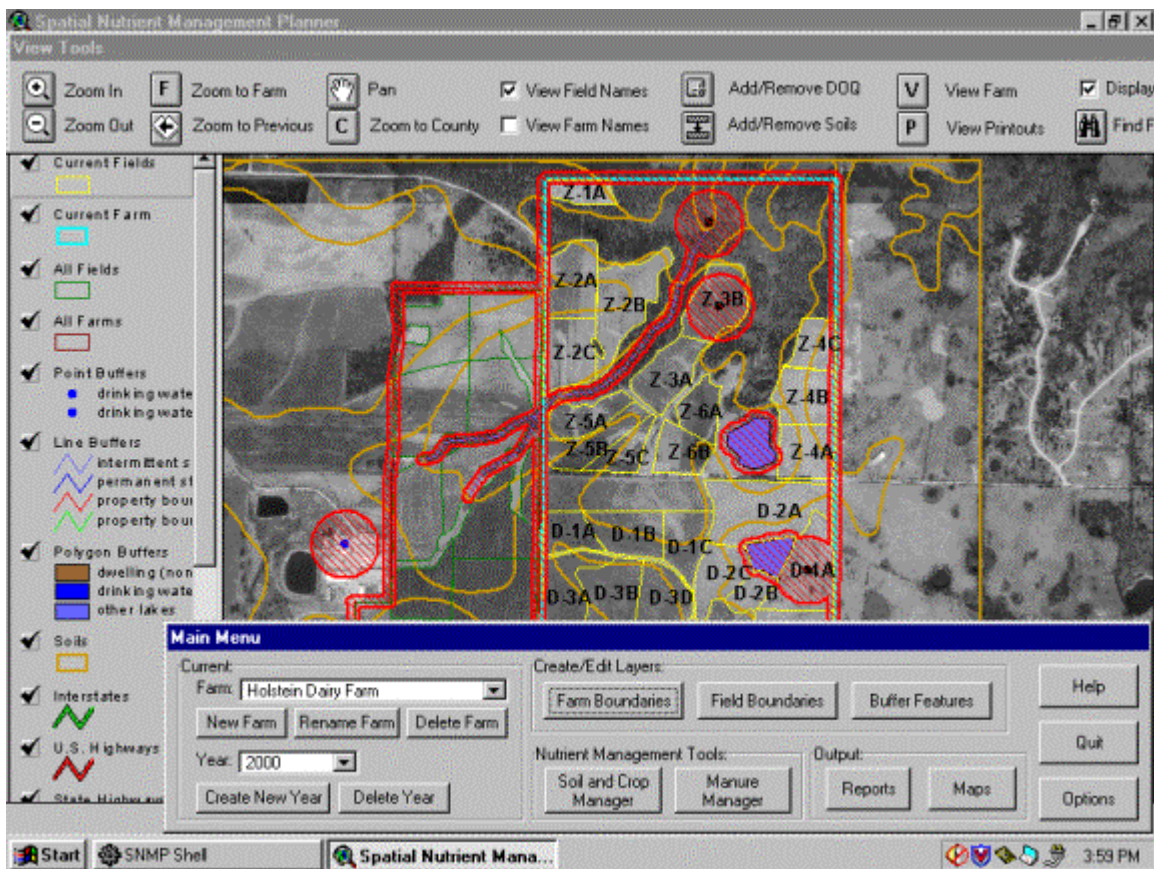
Following a trip to the field, the conservationists gathered in the classroom to develop an actual prescribed burn plan. Each of the three groups developed a burn plan to meet a different client objective of cedar control, wildlife management, and increased forage production. The final plans were then presented and discussed among the class.

In January, staff members from Ecological Sciences attended a training session on software to assist with nutrient management planning. David Wells, Resource Specialist, McAlester, and Larry Poindexter, Nutrient Management Specialist, Stillwater, attended the training at the University of Missouri in Columbia. They received training on the Spatial Nutrient Management Planner (SNMP), a product of the University of Missouri, <http://www.cares.missouri.edu/snpm/>, and also received training on the Manure Management Planner (MMP), a product of the University of Purdue, <http://www.agry.purdue.edu/mmp/>.

The SNMP is a decision support tool that facilitates the collection, analysis, and presentation of spatial information related to nutrient management planning. It provides the opportunity to create a comprehensive nutrient planning map, including field and buffer setbacks. The SNMP is integrated with the MMP and the user can export information from SNMP to MMP to create multi-year manure allocation

plans. The MMP has document maker capability to enable the information in the software to be put in a word document for clients. An Oklahoma CNMP Document has been created in MMP.

The SNMP and MMP will be used in the near future by Oklahoma NRCS to develop both Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plans (CNMP's) and other nutrient management plans as well.



Spatial Nutrient Management Plan (SNMP) Example

“Verl” Eastern Gamagrass was recently released by ARS, OSU, and the NRCS as a new selection of Eastern Gamagrass exhibiting improved seed pollination, germination, and forage production qualities. It is recommended for pasture and hay in the eastern and southern United States where appropriate management is used. This grass is named after Mr. Verl H. Louthan, retired ARS Technician at Woodward. Since the late 1980's, several Oklahoma NRCS employees have assisted in the collection and evaluation of plant materials that led to the eventual release of “Verl”.

Oklahoma Range Site Descriptions are being replaced by Ecological Site Descriptions. Dr. Jack Eckroat, Ecological Sciences, is writing the Ecological Site Descriptions.

Oklahoma Range Sites were last updated circa 1960 and were, at most, one or two pages in length. The new Ecological Site Descriptions vary from 10 to 30 pages in length and contain much more data and technical information, along with pictures of each vegetative state a site may go through over time. Unlike the Range Sites that were associated with the 50 states (i.e. OK, TX., KS, etc.), the new Ecological Site Descriptions are written for Major Land Resource Areas (MLRA). Ecological Site Descriptions may cover two or more states (they usually do cover more than one state). The state having the largest land area of the Ecological Site has the lead in writing the new site description. The lead state usually uses its Ecological Site name (agreed upon by states) and always uses its numbering system. This is why there may be a TX or KS number in Oklahoma's eFOTG Section II. The states work together to correlate their efforts. The lead state has full writing and editing privileges.

Ecological Site Descriptions offer interested parties an insight into the vegetation that was present in the Presumed Historical Plant Community (HPC) and management techniques that can be implemented to either maintain or manipulate the vegetation towards a desired state.

Seventy-nine Ecological Site Descriptions have been added to eFOTG Section II. These descriptions will be in a perpetual state of completion as new data, pictures, and writings are added, deleted, and edited.

ENGINEERING (Reported by Johnny Green)

Utah EWP Assistance

Four people from the Oklahoma NRCS Engineering staff have been detailed to Utah as construction inspectors to assist with current EWP efforts in the St. George, Utah vicinity. From the Pauls Valley Watershed Office, Russell Miller was sent to assist. Assisting from the Perry Watershed Office are Fred Armstrong, Mike Goforth, and Jon Lillie. This detail will last for a period not to exceed six weeks in duration.

Design/Construction Status

	In Progress This Time Period	Completed This Time Period
Detail Survey	Cottonwood 54, Logan Co. Sallisaw Creek 15, Adair Co. Sallisaw Creek 16, Adair Co. Sugar Creek (Devil's Canyon Drop), Caddo Co. Sugar Creek (Gracemont Drop), Caddo Co. Sugar Creek (Control), Caddo Co. Sugar Creek (Priority Reach 1), Caddo Co.	
Geologic Reports		Bitter Creek 18, Grady Co.
Soil Mechanics Analysis/Reports	Barnitz Creek 13, Dewey Co. Barnitz Creek 14, Dewey Co. Lower Bayou 12, Love Co. Upper Blue River 36, Pontotoc Co.	
Design	Barnitz Creek 13, Dewey Co. Barnitz Creek 14, Dewey Co. Bitter Creek 18, Grady Co. Cobb Creek 2, Washita Co. Double Creek 3, Washington Co. Mill Creek 18, Johnston Co. Sandstone Creek 1, Roger Mills Co. Sandstone Creek 13, Roger Mills Co. Sandstone Creek 16A, Roger Mills Co. Sugar Creek (Devil's Canyon Drop), Caddo Co. Turkey Creek 9, Washita Co. Upper Red Rock 52, Noble Co.	Stillwater Creek 33C, Payne Co.
Check Prints & Field Reviews	Mill Creek 18, Johnston Co.	Stillwater Creek 33C, Payne Co.
Construction	Double Creek 5, Washington Co. Lower Clear Boggy 32B, Atoka Co. Sugar Creek (Binger Bridge), Caddo Co.	Sugar Creek 3 (repair); Caddo Co.

OFFICE OF OUTREACH/CIVIL RIGHTS (Reported by Jasper Parker)

The office of outreach is continuing to focus on providing information to underserved customers throughout Oklahoma. Staff recently participated in the 9th Women in Ag (WIA) meeting held in Perry on March 17, 2005. The meeting was well attended, with over 200 individuals registered. Jasper Parker and staff are

currently working with several planning committees across the state to host additional WIA meetings in FY 2005. Following is the list of upcoming planning meetings.

Women in Ag Planning Meetings:

1. February 4th at McAlester, involving Pittsburg, Latimer, Haskell, McIntosh, and LeFlore counties. The WIA meeting is planned for March 31, 2005, at the McAlester Expo Center.
2. February 8th at Vinita, involving Craig, Ottawa, Nowata, and Delaware counties. This was their first meeting to start the planning process.
3. February 15th at Purcell, involving McClain, Cleveland and Garvin counties.
4. February 22nd at Pawhuska, involving Osage, Pawnee, Tulsa, Washington, and Rogers Counties.
5. February 23rd at Anadarko, involving Caddo and Kiowa counties.
6. February 23rd at Enid involving, Garfield, Alfalfa, and Major counties. The WIA meeting is planned for April 7, 2005.
7. February 24th at Muskogee, involving Muskogee, Okmulgee, and Wagoner counties. The WIA meeting is planned for April 19, 2005.

Other outreach activities during the month of February included:

1. A display at the Ag Career Day held at Eastern Oklahoma State University on Feb. 10th
2. Working with Antlers, Tishomingo, and Atoka field offices to plan brush control workshops.
3. Developed a Cooperative Agreement with the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry, to provide technical assistance for their Environmental and Sustainable Program.
4. Provided outreach materials to Purcell, Guymon, and Marietta field offices.
5. Developed Posters for the WIA meeting held in Perry.

OPERATIONS (Reported by Gary O'Neill)

Performance goals are normally developed and allocated to field offices or teams before the end of February. However, the current budget deficit in Oklahoma has delayed this process for FY05. On December 1st preliminary FY05 performance goals were developed, based on the initial mandatory program allocations and an estimate of the discretionary program allocation for Oklahoma. These preliminary projections were adjusted again after Oklahoma received the discretionary program allocation in late January. The last adjustments were made to reflect the impacts of the existing budget shortfall in Oklahoma. It is anticipated that the FY05 performance goals for Oklahoma will be approved by NHQ and communicated to field staff in the near future.

Included in the Oklahoma FY05 discretionary program allocation was a congressional earmark of \$2.3 million for a Grassland Demo in Tar Creek. This earmark, which is similar to the earmark received in FY04, will be passed on to the Oklahoma Conservation Commission (OCC) through a cooperative agreement. The OCC is using these funds to establish native grasses or other grasses suitable to the Tar Creek region on areas that have been negatively impacted by past lead and zinc mining practices. The OCC staff, along with private sector consultants and other local, state, and federal partners, is involved with the investigation, design, and inspection of construction and vegetation of various reclamation projects.

RC&D (Reported by Larry Wright)

Fun Country RC&D

The Fun Country RC&D Council participated in a special Economic Summit initiated by Senator Susan Paddock. A presentation and display explaining the program and organization of RC&D were included. Participants numbered approximately 200 with three state senators and four state representatives.

The RC&D continues to work with the Oklahoma Red Cedar Association on building opportunities for value-added products and to host their Annual Meeting in South Central Oklahoma later this year.

The RC&D is working with Carter County Economic Development Authority to support and expand their tourism opportunities. The "HOG's" in the Heartland, will be having a mini-rally October 6 - 8, 2005. It is sponsored by the Harley Owners Group and currently has plans to make day rides to outlying communities and area attractions. This will provide opportunities for identifying communities within a short commute.

Fun Country RC&D assisted the NRCS Pauls Valley Field Office by meeting with the County Commissioners office and discussing the EWP program and assisted in the development of documentation for the Damage Survey Report.

Tallgrass RC&D

The Tallgrass RC&D Council held their quarterly meeting on February 15th at Claremore at the Rogers State University Aquatic Center. The council approved the following projects: Women in Agriculture meeting, which will be held in June, for Osage, Washington, Pawnee, Rogers, and Tulsa counties and Loan projects for the creation of the Emergency Medical Services for Pawhuska and surrounding communities.

Tallgrass RC&D Council members Cindy Bissett, Peggy Collins, Jim Bailey, and Greg Kindell, RC&D Coordinator, met with Richard Cox, RC&D Coordinator, ASCOG, and Francine Gissy at the Tallgrass RC&D office to discuss the Scenic Byways program to promote Historical Route 66.

Wheatland RC&D

The Wheatland RC&D Council has been planning business expansions with Pond Creek. The Council met with business owners and various coalition partners including; Department of Commerce, Pioneer Technology Center, Autry Technology Center, Rural Business Enterprise, Grant writer, Manufacturing Alliance and Engineer. This was a fact-finding economic development task force meeting to explore funding alternatives and the most crucial objectives.

Wheatland RC&D Council has a Grant Writing Workshop scheduled for March 30th and 31st at the Chisholm Trail Technology Center in Omega, Kingfisher County. The recent Noble, Grant, and Kay counties Women in Agriculture meeting was a huge success, with 182 in attendance.

Wheatland RC&D has begun planning for a Kids Ag-Stravaganza Workshop. This will be a two day seminar involving Wheatland RC&D, Great Plains RC&D, Ft. Reno Grazinglands Research Laboratory, and a statewide environmental education organization.

Wheatland RC&D was successful with a grant application for \$25,000 from the National Tree Trust to assist in the Tree Grow-Out Program with William S. Key Correctional Center.

Ouachita Mountains RC&D

The Ouachita Mountains RC&D Council is providing planning assistance for the following conferences:

- March 31, 2005 - Women in Agriculture & Small Business - Southeast Expo Center, McAlester
- May 3-5, 2005 - Forestry on the Grow Conference & Expo - Western Hills Resort, Wagoner
- May 17, 2005 - McCurtain County Small Farm Conference & Expo - McCurtain County Fairgrounds, Idabel

The Forestry Judging Contest Training Workshop is scheduled for March 22nd at the ODAFF Forestry Division office at Talihina. The Southeast District Forestry Judging Contest for FFA and 4-H clubs is scheduled for March 29th at the Forest Heritage Center in Beavers Bend State Park. This will be the 30th year that Ouachita Mountains RC&D has assisted with this contest. Contest plans include awarding six college scholarships, totaling \$3,200 to the three highest-scoring contestants in FFA and in 4-H. This annual contest and scholarship program is made possible with assistance from conservation districts in southeast Oklahoma and donations provided by the Oklahoma Rural Rehabilitation Corporation and others.

Cherokee Hills RC&D

The Cherokee Hills RC&D Council is proceeding with the implementation of the Poultry Waste Processing Plant (Ken Stamper) Project. This project is running behind schedule somewhat, due to unforeseen issues, but progress continues.

The Council is supporting and assisting two “Women in Ag Conferences. The first will be held April 19th at the Muskogee Northeastern State University campus, hosted by Muskogee, Okmulgee, and Wagoner counties.

Great Plains RC&D

The Great Plains RC&D Council, in collaboration with the Wheatland RC&D Council, is assisting efforts to provide permanent location for the EcoMotion Environmental Education staff leader and Edison the Bus at the Grazinglands Research Laboratory at Fort Reno. The USDA Agriculture Research Service is providing in-kind services to develop a former dairy barn location into an agriculture and natural resource education center for visitors. Outdoor displays and crop fields will also be a part of the visitor experience.

The steering committee for the Southern Plains Agricultural Resources Coalition has nearly completed an extensive business plan. Presentations are scheduled to be made at the Oklahoma Association of Conservation Districts Annual Meeting, Harmon County Conservation District No-Till Workshop in March, and the Oklahoma Sustainability Network Conference at Stillwater in April.

The RC&D, Comanche County Conservation District, and Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge staffs have been meeting monthly to plan the Chief Tabananika Natural Resources Journey outdoor classroom on April 19th – 22nd at the Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge. Approximately 700 fourth grade students have been pre-enrolled for this event.

The Oklahoma Farmers and Ranchers Energy Enterprise project that was recently funded is requesting proposals for administration of the grant. It is estimated that over 20,000 acres of canola have been planted in western Oklahoma this fall.

High Plains RC&D

The High Plains RC&D Council is one of the six national biomass project study areas; others are located in Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, New York, and Pennsylvania. The focus of this project is to develop ways to turn biomass (CRP grass, wheat straw, corn and milo stalks, eastern redcedar and juniper) into electrical energy.

SOILS/GIS (Reported by Jim Ford)

The Soil Survey staff has developed an electronic query that will estimate the production (yield) for Old World Bluestem grasses (Plains and Caucasian) for each data map unit in the NASIS database and write a report for each survey area where Old World Bluestem grasses are grown.

The resource soil scientists will begin locating 30 points, using GPS, in seven counties (Logan, Major, Lincoln, Canadian, Pawnee, Blaine, and Kingfisher) for ground truth target areas in order to identify Eastern Redcedar canopy cover. This is the first step in conducting a spatial assessment of cedar concentration in the selected counties.

WATER RESOURCES AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (Reported by Bill Porter)

Status of Oklahoma Watershed Rehabilitation Projects March 2005			
<i>In Planning</i>			
Watershed	Dam No.	County	Conservation District
Barnitz Creek	13	Dewey	Dewey County CD
Caney-Coon Creek	2M	Coal	Coal County CD
Cobb Creek	1	Washita	Deer Creek CD
Cottonwood Creek	15	Kingfisher	Kingfisher County CD
Cottonwood Creek	16	Canadian	East Canadian CD
Cottonwood Creek	17	Canadian	East Canadian CD
Cottonwood Creek	54	Logan	Logan County CD
Sallisaw Creek	15	Adair	Adair County CD
Sallisaw Creek	16	Adair	Adair County CD
Sallisaw Creek	20	Adair	Adair County CD
Sallisaw Creek	32	Sequoyah	Sequoyah County CD
Sallisaw Creek	33	Sequoyah	Sequoyah County CD
Sallisaw Creek	34	Sequoyah	Sequoyah County CD
Turkey Creek	9	Washita	Washita County CD
<i>In Design</i>			
Mill Creek	18	Johnston	Johnston County CD
Sandstone Creek	16A	Roger Mills	Upper Washita CD
Cobb Creek	2	Washita	Deer Creek CD
Barnitz Creek	14	Dewey	Dewey County CD
<i>Planning & Design Completed - Awaiting Construction</i>			
Cavalry Creek	6	Washita	Washita County CD
Double Creek	2	Washington	Caney Valley CD
Double Creek	3	Washington	Caney Valley CD
Double Creek	6	Washington	Caney Valley CD
Sandstone Creek	1	Roger Mills	Upper Washita CD
Sandstone Creek	13	Roger Mills	Upper Washita CD
<i>Under Construction</i>			
Double Creek	5	Washington	Caney Valley CD
<i>Rehabilitation Completed</i>			
Double Creek	1	Washington	Caney Valley CD
Double Creek	4	Washington	Caney Valley CD
Sandstone Creek	12	Roger Mills	Upper Washita CD
Sandstone Creek	17A	Roger Mills	Upper Washita CD
Sergeant Major Creek	1	Roger Mills	Upper Washita CD
Sergeant Major Creek	2	Roger Mills	Upper Washita CD

EWP Update – Current Status of Work

County	Project	COR	Activity
Garvin #3	Dec 2000 Ice Storm	Charlie Colvin	90% Compete
Washita WS	Jan 2002 Ice Storm	George Townsley	Complete
Kingfisher WS	Jan 2002 Ice Storm	George Townsley	Awarded
Garfield WS	Jan 2002 Ice Storm	George Townsley	Contracting
Major	Oct 2002 Flooding	Dean Cook	Complete
Alfalfa	Oct 2002 Flooding	David McKay	Data Collection
Woods	Oct 2002 Flooding	David McKay	Contracting (2 sites) Data Collection (1)
Woodward	Oct 2002 Flooding	David McKay	Contracting
McCurtain	May 1, 2003 Tornado	Tim Miller	Complete
Nowata	May 15, 2003 Flood	Larry Coppock	Complete
Harper	May 15, 2003 Flood	David McKay	Construction
Dewey	May 15, 2003 Flood	David McKay	Construction
Kay	May 24, 2003 Flood	Larry Coppock	Data Collection
Payne	June 25, 2003 Flood	Dan Smith	Complete
Washington	June 25, 2003 Flood	Larry Coppock	Construction
Caddo	August 2003 Flood	Larry Jarrell	Contracting
Kiowa	August 2003 Flood	Larry Jarrell	Construction
Kingfisher	August 2003 Flood	Dan Smith	Data Collection
Logan	August 2003 Flood	Joe Freeland	Contracting
Cherokee	November 2003 Flood	Larry Coppock	Data Collection
Caddo	March 2004 Flood	Larry Jarrell	Contracting
Harper	March 2004 Flood	David McKay	Data Collection
Kingfisher	March 2004 Flood	Dan Smith	Data Collection
Kay	March 2004 Flood	Dean Cook	Contracting
Payne	March 2004 Flood	Dean Cook	Contracting
Noble	March 2004 Flood	Dean Cook	Contracting
Muskogee	March 2004 Flood	Larry Coppock	Contracting
Osage	March 2004 Flood	Larry Coppock	Data Collection
Sequoyah	April 2004 Flood	Larry Coppock	Contracting
Beaver	June 27, 2004, Flood	David McKay	Contracting

--ZONE NEWS--

ZONE 1 (Reported by Jamey Wood)

TEAM 1

Ellis County

On January 27th The Northwest Range Fire Management Association, along with the Ellis County Extension Service, Ellis County Conservation District, and the NRCS hosted a meeting on Range Management at Harmon. There were 45 people in attendance. The program consisted of Shinnery Management and the OSU Master Cattleman Program presented by Justin Barr, Extension Educator, Ellis County. Terrell Howard, District Conservationist in Ellis County presented a program about the necessity and cost of controlling cedars. He also discussed government programs available to help with the cost of managing shinnery and cedars.



TEAM 2

Woodward County

Mead Ferguson, Woodward County District Director, and Stanley Irving, District Conservationist, attended the January 25th Woodward County Rotary Club meeting. The meeting was held at the Golden Corral and there were 40 in attendance. Mr. Ferguson explained the history of Oklahoma Conservation Districts and their current roles. Mr. Irving explained the NRCS mission and goals and explained all of the NRCS programs available in Oklahoma.

Dewey County

The Taloga field office, working with the Dewey County Commissioner- District #3 and Dewey County Conservation District, has completed stabilization of a county road. A flash flood event in the spring of 2003 caused excessive erosion which was undermining the county roadway. A county road crew provided equipment and assistance to help complete the stabilization project. Pictures of the project are shown below:



Major County

The Major County Conservation District helped sponsor a GPS school on February 3rd. The school was for seed and fertilizer managers and applicators, both private and commercial, or farming operators desiring to learn more about this new technology. Participants learned how to increase profits and enhance the agricultural operation while reducing fatigue, the use of seed and chemicals and the waste of fertilizer. The program included four speakers, advertising booths, and field demonstrations. This program was held at the NW Tech Center in Fairview.

TEAM 3

Noble, Kay, and Grant counties hosted a Woman in Ag Conference February 17, 2005. There were approximately 200 participants. They had 15 booths to view during breaks and a variety of breakout sessions to attend through the day. The Keynote Address was Consumers! Consumers! Driving Demand for Beef in the 21st Century, delivered by Heather Buckmaster, Executive Director, Oklahoma Beef Council.

There has been a lot of positive feedback from the meeting. It was successful because of the hard work of the planning committee. Each person took on tasks and followed through with their duties to make it happen. A great deal of the planning and behind-the-scenes work came from the three conservation districts staffs. This was truly a "team" effort.



ZONE 2 (Reported by Mark Habiger)

Team 4

The Tulsa County Conservation District, Blue Thumb Water Quality Education Program, NRCS, and OCC will be holding the 21st Annual Resource Management Conference on March 10th. The conference theme is "Building Tulsa's Future: A River Runs Through It" and will be held at the Tulsa Garden Center at 2435 South Peoria in Tulsa. The sessions begin at 8:30 am and conclude in the evening. Several speakers are on the agenda with a common theme of water quality and river enhancement. For more information, please contact the Tulsa County Conservation District.

Team 5

A Women in Agriculture meeting is being planned for female agricultural producers in Tulsa, Rogers, Osage, Pawnee and Washington counties. Preliminary planning has already taken place and the district conservationists in the respective counties are asking potential participants to complete surveys to set the agenda. The WIA meeting is scheduled to be held later this month.

Team 5 and 6

The Lower Neosho watershed was chosen for the new Conservation Security Program funding this fiscal year. Parts of nine northeast counties will be involved in implementing this program. District conservationists in these counties are gearing up for what is anticipated to be a heavy workload. Training

for program implementation was held in Fort Worth, Texas, February 22-25, and agency local training is scheduled for early March. The Lower Neosho watershed includes: Ottawa, Craig, Nowata, Rogers, Mayes, Delaware, Cherokee, Muskogee, and Wagoner counties.

ZONE 3 (Reported by Lanny Miller)

Team 7

With the assistance of the Cheyenne and Sayre field offices, Beckham and Roger Mills counties took a big step towards organizing a Prescribed Burn Association on February 7th, with election of officers. Their next meeting will be held March 8th. Speakers will be Dr. Al Bennett, First President of the Big Pasture Prescribed Burn Association, and Larry Wright, Great Plains RC&D. By-laws will also be discussed and developed.

Cavalry Creek Watershed Site 6 (Washita County) will be the first flood control structure in the nation to be decommissioned. Constructed originally in 1957 as a Class "A", Low Hazard structure, it was re-classified as a Class "C", High Hazard structure in 1979 because of the location of the Spring Lake Church Camp immediately downstream of the dam. Since its construction, Site 6 has experienced several sink holes which required extensive grouting that produced little success. The decommissioning will involve the breaching of the structure, removal of the principal spillway pipe, and construction of a rock drop structure to stabilize the grade. Estimated at a total cost of \$293,000, the site is scheduled for rehabilitation work to commence around the first of March.

Team 8

The Harmon County Conservation District and the Hollis NRCS office will co-sponsor a Conservation Tillage Conference on Thursday, March 10, 2005, at the Hollis Civic Center, Hollis, Oklahoma. The conference will focus on no-till and mulch till operations involving cotton and small grain in Harmon County. Speakers will present information on no-till/mulch till cropping systems and equipment dealers will be on hand to discuss equipment options. More information may be obtained from the conservation district office.

Construction is underway on a EWP streambank stabilization project in Kiowa County. Located on Elm Creek, the project cost is estimated at just over \$203,000 and will protect the Moore Bridge. Estimated completion time is 30-40 days.

Team 9

The NRCS and the McClain County Conservation District have partnered to increase the awareness of the eastern redcedars in McClain County. The NRCS office set up a display on the invasion of eastern redcedars and best management practices to control cedars at the USDA service center. In addition, the NRCS has been working with the McClain Conservation District, local newspapers, and the Purcell Library to make a new DVD entitled, "Eastern Redcedar: Invasion of the Creeping Menace" available for public viewing. Two DVD's have been made available for the public; one is available to be checked out at the Purcell Public Library and the second at the USDA/NRCS Purcell Service Center. The McClain County Conservation District has also been working with the NRCS on preparing a locally-led/outreach meeting to deliver valuable information to home and landowners on the "invasion" of eastern redcedars. The outreach meeting is scheduled on March 9th. This partnership effort will be held at the Wayne Mid- American Technology Center.

The Stephens County Conservation District and the Duncan NRCS office held a locally led/outreach meeting at the Stephens County Fairgrounds on January 31st. Advertised in the local newspaper, TV station in Lawton and Wichita Falls, Texas, this meeting is held annually in conjunction with the Stephens County Livestock Growers Association Banquet. The purpose of the meeting is collect input from the general public, livestock producers, farmers, and local interested citizens regarding their concerns about issues at the local level for improvement and conservation of natural resources in Stephens County. One-hundred fifty-five people attended the annual event.



The Pauls Valley NRCS office hosted a Prescribed Burn Training on February 24th to demonstrate burn techniques and provide a training opportunity for NRCS employees to establish/maintain burn plan approval authority. The Garvin Conservation District held its first annual conservation tree sale and several sites are being evaluated for potential EWP projects in Garvin County.

ZONE 4 (Reported by Roylene Rides at the Door)

Staff

All vacancies have been placed on hold based on state budget.

Farm Bill

The 21 offices in Zone 4 have over 1,650 applications for EQIP and have completed all ranking. Offices have conservation plans and contracts developed and just waiting for protracts to work. Shawnee, Holdenville, and Wewoka District Conservationists attended the CSP training in Ft. Worth in February. A CSP workload plan has been developed and Zone 4 is ready to implement the CSP program. Zone 4 had 17 of 45 applications approved for WHIP and 12 more applications could be funded if additional funds are received.

Training

An ATV training was held for NRCS and conservation district employees in Stigler on February 9th and February 16th in Atoka. All teams in Zone 4 have completed brush management training.

Team 10

Team 10 offices are spending all of their time on Farm Bill Program activities. Some offices are completing ranking EQIP applications, others are busy preparing contracts and obligating FY05 EQIP funds.

Offices in Shawnee, Wewoka, and Holdenville are training and preparing for the CSP sign-up this spring. Shawn Fleming, DC, Shawnee, is the designated lead conservationist for the Little River Watershed CSP area. Assignments have been made to have four-person teams assisting with the CSP workload in each office working with this program.

Team 11

Durant and Atoka attended pipeline training. Brush management training will also be held for Team 11 employees.

Tim Jones attended the National Society for Range Management Meeting in Fort Worth, Texas, in February.

Durant office has five continuous CRP participants with tree planting plans on Riparian Buffers and Shelterbelts.

The Ardmore and Marietta offices conducted an outreach meeting on February 14th at the OSU Early Spring Roundup, held at the Red River Livestock at Overbrook. A display booth and pictures were

presented by the Ardmore staff, Warren Sanders from the Marietta office made a presentation and both staffs answered questions for approximately 130 landowners in attendance.



Team 12

Items from Team 12 activities for the March OCC Partnership Report are as follows:

All Team 12 offices have been working on evaluating and ranking EQIP applications and developing FY2005 EQIP contracts. Ranking is near completion in all offices and the majority of the new contracts have been written.

The Stigler NRCS and Haskell County Conservation District staffs hosted a six-hour ATV training session at a site northeast of Stigler on February 9th amidst morning snow flurries. Employees who received an ATV Training Certification included: Stony Brown, SCT; Poteau, James Harrison, SCT, Wilburton; Shane Harjo, SCT; Eufaula, Scott Schneider, TSO Ag Engineer, McAlester; and Robert Wilson, Engineering Aid, Haskell County Conservation District. Clay Davis, SCT, Claremore, conducted the training session.

The Wilburton NRCS staff and Talihiina Conservation District hosted a Brush Management training session at a location northeast of Talihiina on February 10th for members of Team 12. David Wells, Resource Specialist, McAlester TSO, conducted the training session. There were 13 Team 12 members in attendance.

Team 12 members attended a Livestock Watering Facility and Pipeline Design training session in McAlester on February 15th hosted by the McAlester TSO. Tim Miller, Resource Engineer, and David Wells, Resource Specialist, McAlester TSO, and Chris Stoner, Ag Engineer, NRCS State Office, conducted the training session with 12 team members in attendance.

The Talihiina Conservation District sponsored a Fire Ant Information meeting at the Talihiina Kiamichi Technology Center on February 22nd. There were 16 people in attendance and Wayne Smith, OSU Cooperative Extension Service, presented the information.

The Kiamichi Conservation District in Choctaw County held their annual Land Judging contest on February 16th. Those partners assisting with the contest were NRCS, the Choctaw Nation, OSU Cooperative Extension Service, and County FFA and 4-H Chapters. P. J. Workman, Soil Scientist with the Choctaw Nation, assisted with the setup and classification of soils being judged. Choctaw County had the largest recorded contest to date with 64 land judging participants. See photo of the event below.

**Zone 4 Team Meetings**

Team 10 has scheduled the next team meeting for April 13th in McAlester at 9:30 a.m.

Team 11 has scheduled the next team meeting for April 20th at the Community Center in Tishomingo at 9:30 a.m.

Team 12 has scheduled the next team meeting for April 6th at the Talihina Kiamichi Technology Center at 9:30 a.m.

That concludes my report of activities for the past month. If you have questions or need further information, please let me know.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "M. Darrel Dominick".

M. Darrel Dominick
State Conservationist